

**(Washington, DC)** Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) has introduced a resolution recognizing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which is July 1, 2010. CITES was created in 1973 to ensure that international trade in wild plants and animals does not threaten their survival. **(Please find attached a copy of the legislation)**

“Launched with a few signatory nations, CITES has now 175 parties that have an international obligation and responsibility to protect our planets’ endangered animals and plants. Nearly 5,000 species of animals and 28,000 species of plants are protected by the Convention against over-exploitation through international trade. Adherence to these protective measures has proven to have benefited the conservation of animals and plants worldwide,” said Hastings.

“Unfortunately, more and more species are at risk of extinction and international trade, both legal and illegal, has exacerbated the dangers. International wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars per year and to include hundreds of millions of live plants and animals and derived products such as food products, leather and fur, ornamentals, ivory, and timber. Such high levels of exploitation and trade in wild animals and plants, together with other factors such as habitat loss, are capable of bringing some species close to extinction.”

Every two to three years the parties of CITES meet at the Conference of the Parties to review the status of species in danger of extinction and establish trade restrictions. The 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in March 2010.

“Several proposals were submitted during the summit, some of them ensuring better protections for endangered species, others trying to downlist species and re-open trade. While proposals to downlist elephant populations in Tanzania and Zambia were successfully defeated, several proposals to establish stronger protections for the polar bear, eight sharks, the bluefin tuna and other species were unfortunately rejected. I am saddened to see that economic interests have prevailed over species conservation, which could ultimately bring them close to extinction. This is unacceptable,” added Hastings.

The resolution will congratulate the Convention on its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary and recognize the important contributions it has made since its establishment in regulating international trade in

endangered species and protecting endangered species worldwide. It will also applaud the Convention's recent leadership in protecting elephants in Tanzania and Zambia. Lastly, the resolution will urge all parties to the Convention to collaborate effectively to curb excessive exploitation of species for international trade and, in particular, to adopt stronger protections for the polar bear, sharks, bluefin tuna and other endangered species at the 16<sup>th</sup>

meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2013.

**Joining Hastings as original co-sponsors of the legislation include:** Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz, John Conyers Jr., and Fortney Pete Stark.

**Endorsing organizations:** The Wildlife Conservation Society and International Fund for Animal Welfare.

*Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.*

###

---

 [Cites Anniversary.doc.pdf](#)